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Press Release

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PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – U.S. Northern Command and the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding that defines their working relationship regarding homeland defense–related activities.

The purpose of the MOU is to recognize evolving matters of mutual interest and benefit to USNORTHCOM and UCCS and to establish a framework within which these matters may be addressed. Specifically, it establishes a link between the university's Network Information and Space Security Center (NISSC) homeland defense efforts and USNORTHCOM.

"By working together, I believe we can make a difference in the prevention of or lessening of the impact of a terrorist attack," Pam Shockley–Zalabak, chancellor, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, said. "I believe we can develop new infrastructure architectures that are more secure than what exists today."

The Network Information and Space Security Center (NISSC) located on the campus, will work in collaboration with industry, government and other academic entities to share information, identify needs and find solutions to critical needs, according to Bill Ayen, NISSC director.

"The initial focus has been on military and non–military information assurance activities but these activities have now been expanded to include homeland defense and homeland security challenges. Besides increasing the level of research in these areas, one of the first results will be specialized curriculum and training for military, civil government, and industry partners."

NISSC was initially established to focus on information assurance efforts in support of the then U.S. Space Command. Information Assurance deals with operations that protect and defend information and information systems by ensuring their availability, integrity, authentication, confidentiality, and non–repudiation. To accommodate the demand for well educated information technology and security–related personnel in government, military, and industries today, UCCS established the Master of Engineering degree in Information Assurance. UCCS developed curriculum was recently certified by the National Security Agency under their Information Assurance Courseware Evaluation program.

As part of the USNORTHCOM and UCCS signing ceremony held on the UCCS campus, seven individuals from Peterson Air Force Base were presented graduate certificates in information assurance. These individuals completed four graduate–level computer science courses despite mission and organizational changes that had personally affected them since enrolling in March 2002.

The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs will begin offering a four–course graduate certificate program this fall in Homeland Defense. The focus of the program will be on understanding organizational, technical, cultural and policy aspects of homeland defense. Courses in the certificate program may be used to meet requirements in existing campus graduate programs.

The courses the university will offer include:

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Homeland defense–related military and civilian organizations, their missions and legal issues;

Relationships and information sharing between federal, state and local agencies;

Protecting critical infrastructures and engineering future secure systems; and

Understanding terrorists, their methods, legal issues, and countering threats.

Major General Dale W. Meyerrose, Director, Command Control Systems, for North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and Director of Architectures and Integration, for U.S. Northern Command said, "This is another achievement in our continuing relationship with UCCS."

U.S. Northern Command began operating last October out of Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

Its mission is to conduct operations to deter, prevent, and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories, and interests within the assigned area of responsibility and, as directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, provide military assistance to civil authorities including consequence management operations.

CU–Colorado Springs, located on Austin Bluffs Parkway in northeast Colorado Springs, is the fastest growing university in Colorado and one of the fastest growing universities in the nation. The university offers 25 bachelor s degrees, 17 master s and two doctoral degrees. The campus enrolls more than 7,400 students annually.